

In re Patent Application of:
DE LAENDER ET AL.
Serial No. 10/660,067
Confirmation No. 6186
Filed: September 11, 2003
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In the Claims:

Claims 1-63 (Cancelled).

64. (Currently Amended) A pallet comprising:

a top support member for supporting cargo;

a bottom support member;

a plurality of solid support blocks for separating the top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, ~~at least one of the support blocks comprising first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces;~~

each solid support block comprising a composite material entirely devoid of any openings and comprising at least one cellulosic material and at least one thermoplastic material, and having upper and lower support member fastening surfaces for defining respective upper and lower support member fastener areas, the at least one thermoplastic material comprising polyethylene having a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter; and

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a plurality of fasteners fastening the top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the respective upper and lower support member fastener areas.

65. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

66. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 65, wherein the first, second and third rows are positioned substantially parallel to each other.

67. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 65, wherein the top support member comprises:

three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports; and

at least one plate coupled to a top surface of the three cross supports.

Claims 68-69 (Cancelled).

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70. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the polyethylene is selected from the group consisting of a linear low density polyethylene, an ultra low density polyethylene, a low density polyethylene, a high density polyethylene, and an ultra high molecular weight polyethylene.

Claims 71-72 (Cancelled).

73. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellulous material has particles sizes between about 0.1 mm and about 1 mm.

Claim 74 (Cancelled).

75. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the cellulous material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycled paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

Claims 76-79 (Cancelled).

80. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein the at least one cellulous material includes particle sizes between about 0.05 mm and about 4 mm.

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81. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein a concentration of the cellulous material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

82. (Currently Amended) A pallet comprising:

a top support member comprising a plurality of spaced apart cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, and at least one plate coupled to an upper surface of said plurality of spaced apart cross members for supporting cargo;

a bottom support member;

a plurality of solid support blocks for separating the plurality of cross supports and the bottom support member so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, ~~at least one of the support blocks comprising first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces;~~

each solid support block comprising a composite material entirely devoid of any openings and comprising at least one cellulous material and at least one thermoplastic material, and having upper and lower support member fastening surfaces for defining respective upper and lower fastener area, the at least one thermoplastic material comprising at least one of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8

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grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter; and

a plurality of fasteners fastening the top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the respective upper and lower fastener areas.

83. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

84. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 83, wherein the plurality of cross supports comprise at least three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, and wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports.

Claims 85-86 (Cancelled).

87. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein the cellulosic material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar

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cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycled paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

88. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein a concentration of the cellulous material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

89. (Withdrawn) A method for making a pallet comprising at least one top support member adapted to support cargo and at least one bottom support member, and a plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks for separating the at least one top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, the method comprising:

forming each oval-shaped solid support block to comprise a composite material comprising at least one cellular material and at least one thermal plastic material, and having exposed outer surfaces devoid of any openings for completely defining a fastener area; and

fastening the at least one top and bottom support members with a plurality of nails to the plurality of oval-shaped solid support blocks via the fastener areas.

90. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is selected from the group consisting of polypropylene and polyethylene.

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91. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polyethylene has a density between about 0.9 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.98 grams per cubic centimeter.

92. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 90, wherein the polypropylene is formed from the group consisting of homopolymers and copolymers having densities between about 0.8 grams per cubic centimeter and about 0.99 grams per cubic centimeter.

93. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the thermoplastic material is a thermosetting resin selected from the group consisting of polyesters, epoxies and vinylesters.

94. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein the cellular material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycles paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

95. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 89, wherein a concentration of the cellular material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

96. (Currently Amended) A pallet comprising:
a top support member for supporting cargo;

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a bottom support member;

a plurality of solid support blocks for separating the top and bottom support members so that a lifting member can be inserted therebetween, ~~at least one of the support blocks comprising first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces;~~

each solid support block comprising a composite material entirely devoid of any openings and comprising at least one cellulosic material and at least one thermoplastic material, and having upper and lower support member fastening surfaces for defining respective upper and lower support member fastener areas, the at least one thermoplastic material comprising at least one of polyesters, epoxies and vinyl esters; and

a plurality of fasteners fastening the top and bottom support members to the plurality of solid support blocks via the respective upper and lower support member fastener areas.

97. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein the plurality of solid support blocks comprises three groups of blocks, wherein a first group of support blocks is positioned in a first row adjacent a first edge of the pallet, a second group of support blocks is positioned in a second row

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across the center of the pallet, and a third group of support blocks is positioned in a third row adjacent a second edge of the pallet.

98. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 97, wherein the first, second and third rows are positioned substantially parallel to each other.

99. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 97, wherein the top support member comprises:

three cross supports positioned generally parallel to each other, wherein the first, second, and third rows of support blocks support the three cross supports; and

at least one plate coupled to a top surface of the three cross supports.

100. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein the cellulosic material has particles sizes between about 0.1 mm and about 1 mm.

101. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein the cellulosic material is selected from the group consisting of wood, linen flax shives, bagasse from sugar cane, jute, rice husks, paper fiber, recycled paper, nut shells, cornhusks, and bamboo.

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102. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein the at least one cellulos material includes particle sizes between about 0.05 mm and about 4 mm.

103. (Previously Presented) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein a concentration of the cellulos material in the composite is between about 40 percent and about 60 percent.

104. (New) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein at least one of the support blocks comprises first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces.

105. (New) The pallet according to claim 64, wherein at least one of the support blocks has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of an oval, a teardrop, an egg shape, an elongated hexagon, a diamond shape and a kite shape.

106. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein at least one of the support blocks comprises first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved

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surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces.

107. (New) The pallet according to claim 82, wherein at least one of the support blocks has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of an oval, a teardrop, an egg shape, an elongated hexagon, a diamond shape and a kite shape.

108. (New) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein at least one of the support blocks comprises first and second substantially flat surfaces located on opposite ends of a longitudinal axis, third and fourth substantially flat surfaces between the opposite ends of the longitudinal axis, and curved surfaces between the first and third flat surfaces, between the first and fourth flat surfaces, between the second and third flat surfaces and between the second and fourth flat surfaces.

109. (New) The pallet according to claim 96, wherein at least one of the support blocks has a cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of an oval, a teardrop, an egg shape, an elongated hexagon, a diamond shape and a kite shape.